

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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CONFIDENTIAL MONTEVIDEO 2315

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, PINT, UY

SUBJ: ARMY GENERAL ORDER 7777 THREATENS OFFICERS GUILTY OF
CORRUPTION

REF: (A) MONTEVIDEO 2121 (DTG R 301217Z JUN 78) (B) MONTEVIDEO
2085 (DTG 262228Z JUN 78)

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY HAS OBTAINED A COPY, FROM USUALLY
RELIABLE PRESS SOURCE, OF ARMY CONFIDENTIAL GENERAL ORDER
7777, ISSUED JULY 3 BY CINC GENERAL GREGORIA ALVAREZ.
THIS ORDER STATES THAT (A) THE ARMED FORCES POLITICAL PLAN
TO RETURN URUGUAY TO REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY BY 1981 IS
IRREVERSIBLE; (B) THERE WILL BE NO DISCIPLINARY ACTION TAKEN
AGAINST THOSE MILITARY PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ABUSES DURING THE WAR AGAINST SUBVERSION; AND (C) HOWEVER,
THOSE WHO HAVE OBTAINED SPECIAL PRIVILEGES, PERSONAL BENEFIT
OR ENRICHED THEMSELVES WILL BE PUNISHED WITH THE FULL WEIGHT
OF THE LAW. EMBASSY SOURCES ATTRIBUTE CONSIDERABLE SIGNIFICANCE
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TO THE GENERAL ORDER, WHICH THEY VIEW AS DESIGNED TO REASSURE
MANY MIDDLE-GRADE OFFICERS THAT ALVAREZ WILL INDEED STEP DOWN
AS PLANNED ON FEBRUARY 1, 1979 AND THAT THERE WILL BE NO
"WITCH-HUNT" OF THOSE GUILTY OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES, WHILE
LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN FOR ALVAREZ TO MOVE AGAINST SELECTED
HARDLINE OPPONENTS WHO HAVE ENRICHED THEMSELVES ILLICITLY
DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS. END SUMMARY.

2. UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION OF TEXT OF GENERAL ORDER 7777

IS AS FOLLOWS:

"THE NATIONAL ARMY HAS SUFFERED A PAINFUL MUTILATION (I.E. THE PRANTL AFFAIR) THAT CAN ONLY BE ENDURED WITH MONOLITHIC UNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY AS INHERITORS OF THE PRESTIGE OF ARTIGAS'S ARMY.

NEVERTHELESS, THE ENEMIES (OF THE ARMY) PROMPT TO EXPLOIT A SITUATION APPARENTLY FAVORABLE TO THEIR INTERESTS, PRETEND TO AFFECT ITS DISCIPLINE AND MORALE, SPREADING BASELESS RUMORS AND STORIES.

IN CONSEQUENCE, THE UNDERSIGNED CONSIDERS IT TIMELY TO REITERATE THAT:

1) THE POLITICAL PROCESS APPROVED BY THE ARMED FORCES AND MADE PUBLIC ON AUGUST 9, 1977, IS IRREVERSIBLE. THROUGH THIS PROCESS, THE RETURN TO A REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY WILL BE PROMOTED BY THE GUADUAL TRANSFERENCE OF THE EXERCISE OF POWER TO A GOVERNMENT ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE, RESERVING TO THE INSTITUTION OF THE ARMED FORCES, THROUGH A CONSTITUTION APPROVED BY THE CITIZENRY, THE POSSESSION OF THE FORCE TO PRESERVE THIS NEW DEMOCRACY, AND PREVENT ITS RETURN TO SUBVERSIVE AND CORRUPT PRACTICES.

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2) THIS GENERAL COMMAND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICY DETERMINED PREVIOUSLY, WILL NOT PERMIT ANY FORM OF REVIEW OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY ITS COMPONENTS DURING THE WAR AGAINST SUBVERSION; IF THEY ARE BLAMED FOR ANY ACTIVITY VIOLATING HUMAN RIGHTS, THE UNDERSIGNED TAKES THE RESPONSIBILITY OF HAVING GIVEN THE FIRST ORDER IN THIS REGARD, BECAUSE OF HIS CONDITION OF CHIEF OF THE JOINT ARMED FORCES AT THE TIME OF REFERENCE.

3) NOTWITHSTANDING THAT EXPRESSED ABOVE, IT IS THE DECISION OF THIS GENERAL COMMAND THAT, WHEN THERE IS PROOF, ALL ACTIONS WILL BE REVIEWED TO SANCTION, WITH ALL THE WEIGHT OF THE LAW AND THE CONTEMPT (OF THE ARMY) THOSE WHO OBTAINED PRIVILEGES, PERSONAL OR FAMILY BENEFITS, OR FILLED THEIR POCKETS WITH GOLD, IN THE SHADOW OF THE SOLDIERS AND OFFICERS WHO DIED FIGHTING AGAINST SUBVERSION OR OF THE DIFFICULT SITUATION OF THE PROCESS AT THIS MOMENT, WHATEVER MAY BE THE PLACE THEY OCCUPY IN URUGUAYAN SOCIETY.

THE PRESENT ORDER MUST BE IMMEDIATELY MADE KNOWN TO HIGHER AND SUBORDINATE PERSONNEL AND, AFTER ITS

RECEIPT, WILL SERVE AS GUIDANCE IN THE CLASSES OF THE
OFFICERS' ACEDEMY.

THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE ARMY"

3. THE EXISTANCE OF THIS GENERAL ORDER WAS FIRST REPORTED
TO THE EMBASSY BY A RANKING AIR FORCE OFFICER OF THE
ALVAREZ CAMP. THIS OFFICER STATED THAT ALVAREZ HAD ISSUED
THE ORDER TO COUNTER RUMORS BEING SPREAD BY HARDLINE ELEMENTS
THAT HE WOULD NOT STEP DOWN ON FENRUARY 1, 1979 AND,
MORE IMPORTANTLY, THAT HE WOULD BOW TO U.S. PRESSURE AND
INITIATE A "WITCH-HUNT" OF THOSE GUILT OF HUMAN RIGHTS
ABUSES. THE KEY OPERATIVE PARGRAPH HOWEVER, THIS OFFICER
NOTED, IS NUMBER THREE, WHICH WILL BE USED TO BRING DOWN
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SUCH HARDLINE OPPONENTS OF ALVAREZ AS GENERALS BALLESTRINO
AND PAULOS. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, THESE OFFICERS ARE
GUILTY OF LINING THEIR POCKETS, AND THE ALVAREZ FORCES,
ARMED WITH EVIDENCE, ARE ONLY AWAITING A PROPITIOUS MOMENT
TO MOVE AGAINST THEM. SUBSEQUENTLY, OTHER EMBASSY CONTACTS
HAVE CONFIRMED THE EXISTANCE AND PURPORTED INTENT OF THE
CONFIDENTIAL GENERAL ORDER IN QUESTION, WITH A PRESS SOURCE
PROVIDING THE TEXT.

4. COMMENT: THE MISSION BELIEVES THAT THE CONTENT AND PUR-
POSE OF THE GENERAL ORDER, AS REPORTED ABOVE ARE ESSENTIALLY
ACCURATE. HOWEVER, THE APPLICATION OF THE CLEAR THREAT
CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH THREE REMAINS UNCLEAR. ALVAREZ
MAY SIMPLY USE THE CORRUPTION ISSUE AS A BARGANING CHIP,
EXCHANGING IT FOR A WITHDRAWAL OF HARDLINE OPPOSITION TO
IMPLEMENTATION OF HIS PROGRAM. OR, HE COULD PRESS THE
ISSUE TO ROOT OUT HIS MOST CONSERVATIVE OPPONENTS AND
FURTHER STRENGTHEN HIS FORCES WITHIN THE KEY JUNTA OF
GENERAL OFFICERS. GIVEN THE URUGUAYAN MILITARY'S INCLINA-
TION TOWARS COMPROMISE, ITS TRADITIONAL AVOIDANCE OF DRASIC
SOLUTIONS, AND ITS NECESSITY FOR INSTITUTIONAL SELF-
PRESERVATION, WE WOULD ANTICIPATE THE FORMER. HOWEVER, IN
THE FACE OF HARDLINE OBSTANCY, ALVAREZ WOULD SEEMINGLY
HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO MOVE AGAINST THESE ELEMENTS.
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